CLAIMS

I claim:

1. A method of indicating program selections in a passenger entertainment system including a seat controller unit receiving programming signals over a plurality of radio frequency (RF) channels and generating display signals from the programming signals, wherein the program selections are made through a passenger control unit, said method comprising the steps of:

assigning a program channel to each of the program selections available to the passenger;

allocating one of the RF channels to carry programming signals corresponding to more than one program channel; and

displaying the program channel corresponding to a program selection carried on the allocated one of the RF channels, and displaying the program channel corresponding to another program selection carried on the allocated one of the RF channels in response to a change in the program selection using the passenger control unit.

2. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of displaying the display signals of the programming signals corresponding to the program selection.

3. The method according to claim 1, wherein the program selection is changed using up/down channel selection buttons on the passenger control unit and wherein a program channel that is next in sequence to the program channel corresponding to a current program selection is displayed in response to an up channel selection and a program channel that is previous in sequence to the program channel corresponding to the current program selection is displayed in response to a down channel selection.

4. The method according to claim 1, wherein the allocated one of the RF channels carries a plurality of data streams, each carrying programming signals corresponding to a different one of said more than one program channel.

5. The method according to claim 1, further comprising the steps of:

retrieving configuration data that specifies the number of RF channels;

allocating a first plurality of RF channels to carry programming signals from a first device generating NTSC video streams based on the configuration data; and

allocating a second plurality of RF channels to carry programming signals from a second device generating MPEG video streams based on the configuration data.

6. The method according to claim 5, wherein each of the first plurality of RF channels carries a single NTSC video stream and each of the second plurality of RF channels carries multiple MPEG video streams.

7. The method according to claim 6, further comprising the step of allocating one of the second plurality of RF channels to carry multiple MPEG video streams corresponding to one program channel.

8. The method according to claim 7, wherein said one program channel corresponds to a near video-on-demand program channel.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the multiple MPEG video streams corresponding to the near video-on-demand program channel correspond to a single program selection and are transmitted over said one RF channel at different start times.

10. The method according to claim 7, wherein said one program channel corresponds to a video-on-demand program channel.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein the multiple MPEG video streams corresponding to the video-one-demand program channel correspond to different program selections and are transmitted over said one RF channel at a start time commanded by the passenger.